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ABSTRACT

The population of the United States is undergoing an unprecedented demographic transformation with many new students at state colleges and universities coming from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Access to higher education is increasingly important due to: the increased professionalization of work; the connection between productivity and education, the importance of international markets, the existing income inequity in the U.S.; the failure to use the existing and potential skills of African Americans; and the aging of the U.S. workforce. Barriers to access include budget reductions for public education, tuition increases, reductions in financial aid, changes in financial aid, and a negative climate regarding public education. College and university presidents need to be proactive in efforts to increase inclusion of minorities especially in recruitment and admissions, retention and graduation, and program quality. In the area of equity, presidents should recognize that access, inclusion, and equity are the goals of the public university and need to be included in their mission statements. They should moderate and elevate the debate concerning equity in American society and to work actively to promote equity in admissions and faculty/staff hiring. (Contains 10 references.) (JLS)

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Access, Inclusion and Equity:
Imperatives for America's Campuses

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The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) is a Washington-based higher education association of more than 400 public colleges and universities and systems across the United States and in Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands.

AASCU Working Group on Access, Inclusion and Equity

In April 1996, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities convened a working group to address the issues of access, inclusion and equity on state college and university campuses. Ten AASCU presidents and seven others who had worked and were still involved in addressing these higher education issues met for two, day-long meetings. The working group was chaired by Dr. Alice Chandler, president emerita of State University of New York, New Paltz. The products of those meetings and almost year-long communications are this policy paper, *Access, Inclusion and Equity: Imperatives for America's Campuses*, written by Dr. Chandler and approved by the working group. A policy statement, *Statement on Access, Inclusion and Equity*, was lifted from that paper and was approved by both AASCU's Board of Directors and the full membership.

It is hoped that both the statement and the paper will provide an effective foundation and rationale for AASCU institutions as they come to grips with the conflicting opinions of how to include all citizens in the benefits this country has to offer.

PREFACE

America's geographic frontier closed in 1890. Its intellectual frontier is still unlimited. For the past 100 years we have been living on the wealth that our continental expansion yielded us—on the rich farmlands, the immense mineral resources, the abundant natural power, and—most of all—the incredible human energy and talents of a population representing every continent of the earth.

The changes of the coming century are now refocusing our society. America is no longer automatically preeminent either in extracting raw materials or in producing manufactured goods. Other industrialized countries successfully compete against us, even in high technology industries, while many emerging nations, virtually boiling over with young, energetic and low-wage workers, have captured much of our manufacturing base. America is making the transition to a "knowledge economy"—an economy that produces information and services rather than material goods. But this country can only maintain leadership if it is willing to make the same investment in its human capital that it once made in building its factories.

A strong and accessible public higher educational system is the bedrock of a knowledge economy. Public higher education helps build a citizenry capable of informed choices. It also creates the skilled and intellectually dynamic workforce needed to sustain a high-level economy. Ten years ago, AASCU's *Report of the National Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities: Securing the Blessings of Liberty*, urged the importance of maintaining broad access to our public colleges and universities. "Our nation's economic future, our national security, and the education of our people," contended the *Report*, "are all tied together." If we fail to provide higher educational opportunity to all capable individuals who aspire to it, and if we fail to maintain high quality educational systems, we will be wasting our intellectual capital and diminishing our future. *Access* and *affordability* are the watchwords of a democratic system of higher education.

But access to higher education is under challenge at the present time. AASCU's 1986 *Report* already warned against reductions in support for public higher education. It argued that "public officials who propose budget reductions at a time when the republic is handicapped by the burden of an undereducated populace are unthinkingly abetting an act of national suicide." The rhetoric was

strong, but it was in many ways prescient. Over the past 10 years, sharply reduced budgets for public higher education, coupled with rising tuition and cuts to financial aid, have been foreclosing or, at the very least, postponing the possibility of a college education not simply for poor students but for many middle-income students as well. Rather than opening the door to educational opportunity for students who will be the citizens and workforce of the coming century, much of our public policy seems bent on closing that door.

To make matters worse, these changes are taking place at the very moment that the country's population is headed toward an unprecedented demographic transformation—one that will not only vastly increase our numbers over the next half century but also will radically restructure the make-up of our nation. America's population is projected to rise by nearly 50 percent—from 275 to 394 million—over the next half century. Most of that population increase will be comprised of "minorities" and immigrants. In many states, America's colleges and universities will need additional resources and resourcefulness simply to give these new college-aged and college-aspiring young people the same opportunities that students now are guaranteed. Because many of these students will come from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, increased academic and financial support will be needed to promote their success.

How to achieve these goals—how to sustain a system of higher education that is open, effective, inclusive and just—is no easy task. Even in a booming economy, funding for higher education will have to compete against other strong claimants, such as health care and social needs. To what degree "affirmative action" programs can or should be part of the solution to social and economic inequities is the most difficult subset of questions within this larger framework. Courts and legislatures have in recent years increasingly narrowed the role that race and racial preferences may play in college and university decision-making. But until racism and gender discrimination are themselves overcome, colleges and universities will need to make deliberate and active efforts to recruit, retain and hire members of historically underrepresented groups and women. This study devotes considerable attention to affirmative action precisely because it is at once so divisive and yet so critical an issue.

Higher education has a crucial but challenging role to play in forging America's future. It must reaffirm and reinforce its access

mission even in the face of diminishing resources; it must serve as a model for the pluralistic and democratic society of the future even while acknowledging that its own environment and culture are not free from the same "gender gaps" and racial tensions that mar American society as a whole; and it must do so while forging an expanded understanding of equity to eliminate any vestiges of bias in admissions, advancement and hiring. The punishment for failing to sustain an open and high-quality college and university system will be a two-tier, third-rate America—one that divides rich from poor, white persons from persons of color, and that—by perpetuating inequality and failing to take advantage of its talent pool—will inexorably be the loser in a global economy. The reward will be a future consistent with our democratic ideals and an America still prosperous within the framework of a new global economy.

"*America was promises.*" So said the poet Archibald MacLeish. We must make sure that America keeps those promises both to its current students and to the generations of students yet to come.

Access

Access to higher education has always been a key to personal prosperity and success. Changes in American society and changes in the global economy now make higher education the key to national prosperity and success. If America is to prevail as a nation in an increasingly challenging global economy, we must augment our human and intellectual capital by expanding educational opportunity for all Americans. Other industrialized countries are strengthening their school systems and have increasingly skilled workforces as a result. America can do no less. We must equal and outperform other nations in the scope and quality of our higher education opportunities. And we must also recognize the importance of broad and equitable access to public higher education if we are to heal the growing fractures within American society and subdue our increasing divisiveness along economic and racial lines.

For the past 50 years, going to college has increasingly been part of the "good life" in America. College enrollments, which were a mere one million at the end of World War II, have soared to more than 14 million. This growth in higher educational enrollments is a great American success story. For all its flaws and limitations, the openness of our higher educational system is a triumph of the democratic tenet that talent and effort outweigh birth and class status. This triumph must be reconfirmed. There are compelling new reasons why access—the availability of affordable, quality higher education for all capable students—is more important than ever right now.

AMERICA'S ECONOMIC VITALITY DEPENDS ON THE "PERFORMANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL AND ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE."

—Clark Kerr

Why Access Is More Important Than Ever:

- **Work has become professionalized.** A society in which technology is omnipresent requires specialized knowledge and critical acumen from its workforce. One job in four already requires more than a high school education.

- **Productivity and education are interconnected.** There is a direct positive correlation between education and economic efficiency. Even a one-year increase in a worker's schooling is said to generate an almost 10 percent increase in productivity. Higher education has become the fuel of industry as much as coal, gas or electricity. It generates advances in science and

AN EDUCATED FAMILY KNOWS THAT "IT ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR JUST ITS OWN CHILDREN TO DO WELL...BECAUSE IF THEIR OWN CHILDREN ARE RUNNING A COUNTRY WHERE 60 PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN CANNOT MAKE IT, SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN."

—DAVID HALBERSTAM

technology that energize the economy, and it creates the educated workforce that can apply new knowledge.

- **Competition knows no geographic boundaries.** The American economy is no longer defined by its borders. Low-skill, low-wage jobs have largely migrated away from this country and will not return. Business and industry need to "work smart" and take advantage of advanced skills and training if they are to compete effectively.

- **America already faces severe income inequality.** The gap between rich and poor in America is greater than at any time in the past 60 years and is the greatest of any industrialized country in world. The wealthiest 20 percent of U.S. households earn almost 50 percent of household income; the poorest 20 percent earn less than 4 percent. Such social and economic stratification damages the entire fabric of American society.

- **Educational inequality costs money.** The failure to use the *existing* and *potential* skills, education and experience of African American workers alone costs the United States more than $100 billion in lost income and productivity each year. The same total annual income is said to be lost through the underutilization and underpayment of women and a proportional amount is also presumably lost by Hispanics and other disadvantaged minorities.

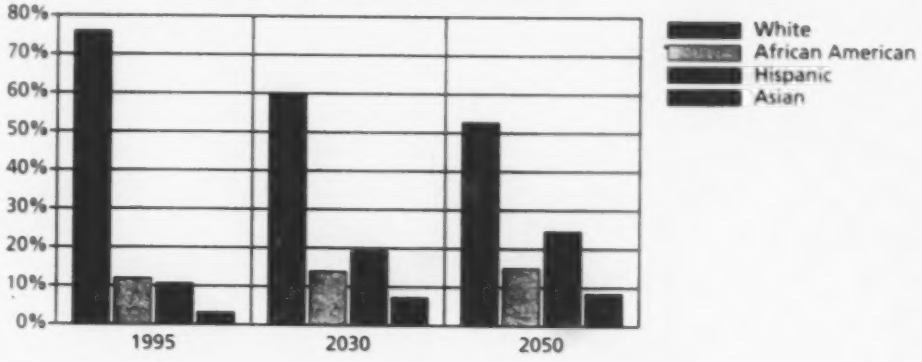
- **Higher education is a great equalizer.** The average annual income of a family headed by a college graduate is 70 percent higher than the average family income of a family headed by a high school graduate. Open access to higher education is a potent accelerator for individuals seeking to improve their lifetime earnings potential. To close the door on access is to threaten even greater income stratification.

- **America's workforce is aging.** By 2000 nearly half the population will be over 45 and 17 percent will be 64 and older. The number of persons 85 and over will multiply tenfold to 24 million by 2040. An aging population—less likely to be employed, more likely to need costly services—requires an energetic and well-educated younger workforce to maintain the economic buoyancy that sustains everyone's quality of life.

- **America faces the greatest demographic shift in its history.** Between 1990 and 2005 women, minorities and recent immigrants will comprise 85 percent of new workers coming into the labor market. By 2030 whites will constitute only 60.5 percent of this nation's population. By 2050 they will barely be a majority—only 52.8 percent. African Americans will be 13.6 percent, Hispanics 24.5 percent and Asian Americans 8.2 percent. Today's so-called minorities are becoming the new majority. If they do not have access to higher education, the superstructure of American prosperity will collapse.

All these new, pragmatic reasons argue the importance of educational access for the sake of our economic survival. But there are timeless reasons as well. A democratic society calls for a high level of education for all its citizenry—and the more complex the society, the greater the educational need. College-educated men and women are more likely to vote, more likely to participate in public and community affairs, and more likely to believe that their participation counts than are those with less education. Personal fulfillment, chances for success, more informed choices—all require the broadest possible access to higher education.

U. S. Demographic Change: 1995-2050



How Far Have We Come?

Over the past 50 years American higher education has experienced its greatest numerical gains in history. But those numbers encompass even broader social changes. Between 1974 and 1994:

- *Women* increased their college-going rate from 26.7 percent to 43.1 percent.

- *African Americans*, who were legally barred from many public colleges until 1954, not only overcame legal obstacles but

"DIVERSITY BREEDS...CREATIVE ENERGY....COMPANIES RULED BY A HIERARCHY OF IMAGINATION AND FILLED WITH PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, RACES AND BACKGROUNDS ARE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OVER TIME."

—PAUL ALLAIRE
CEO XEROX CORPORATION

increased their high school completion rate from 67 percent to 73.7 percent and their enrolled-in-college rate from 27.1 percent to 35.5 percent. Although still lagging behind white students in verbal and mathematical SAT scores, African American students have closed that gap significantly.

- *Hispanic* enrollments in higher education rose by more than 100 percent between 1974 and 1994, thanks mainly to a dramatic population growth, even though the percentage of Hispanic students completing high school and participating in college showed little progress over the 20-year period.

- *Asian Americans* showed a more than 100 percent increase in their college-going rate during the years 1984 to 1994 alone, while Native Americans and nonresident aliens also registered significant enrollment increases.

- *Enrollments by students over 25 years of age* skyrocketed. Between 1980 and 1990, enrollment by persons over 25 grew by 34 percent.

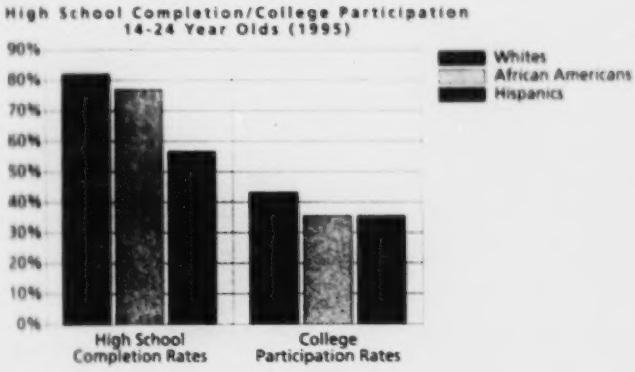
- *Low-income students* have, until recently, been increasingly able to enroll in college. The rise in college attendance by minority, nontraditional, women, and part-time students reflects expanding opportunity for the less affluent. Historically, college affordability for these students was fueled largely by Pell grants and other federal and state need-based grants and scholarship programs.

All these numbers and percentages translate into people and into human lives. They include: a sharecropper's son with a bachelor's and master's degree who has become a college vice president; a millworker's daughter, now an attorney; a mother of four who completed her accounting degree at the age of 43; a Vietnamese "boat person" now teaching in the public schools. These are, indeed, a million points of light in American society.

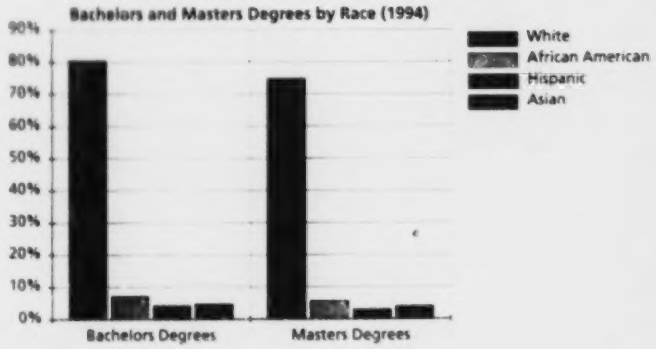
How Far Do We Still Have to Go?

The positive statistics and stories of minority achievement, however, mask persistent inequalities in educational opportunity based on income and ethnicity. The college-going rate among families in lower income groups (those with 1994 incomes below $22,000)

rose only by 8% between 1979 and 1994. African American, Hispanic, and Native American students still trail white students on all educational participation and completion indicators. They are less likely to complete high school, less likely to enroll in college, more likely to attend a two-year than a four-year institution, and far less likely to complete a baccalaureate degree or enroll in graduate or professional programs. At every point along this continuum these minorities and low-income students are underrepresented in proportion to their current presence in the American population. If we do not at least maintain the present rate of progress, these gaps will not close in the coming century—leading to even greater socio-economic stratification within American society in the very period in which the country's "minority" populations are approaching "majority" status.



For these gaps to be closed, the enrollment capacity of America's public colleges and universities will need to grow. Many areas of the country must begin planning now if they are to accommodate the increases generated by the white birthrate and the 140 million-person increase in America's minority population projected for the next half century. (Some of the Western states, for example, are projecting increases in the number of high school graduates ranging from +6 to +126 percent as early as 2009.) These demographic increases will require expanded access capabilities for American colleges *and* affordable tuition combined with adequate financial aid for what will probably be a growing low-income population. Adequate educational opportunity and equity will also mean improvement and equalization of elementary and secondary schooling and outreach to the high schools in particular to improve the completion rate. Colleges will need to develop and strengthen relationships with kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) to create smooth transitions to help ensure that the opportunity for education is open to everyone.



In assessing access, it is also important to disaggregate some of the data. Poverty districts, for example, often have appallingly low rates of high school completion. A survey of 18 Chicago high

schools with the highest rates of poverty within their student populations showed only 3.5 percent of the students actually graduating. Gender, too, makes a difference. The educational attainments of both African American and Hispanic males significantly lag behind those of their female counterparts. Fewer African American males than African American females earn bachelor's, master's or first professional degrees, and a similar pattern holds true for Hispanic males. Asians and Asian Americans are also difficult to categorize monolithically, reflecting, as they do, the differing national and cultural backgrounds of an entire continent.

Minorities are more likely to be enrolled in two-year institutions than are white students, making transfer to senior colleges almost as important an issue for access for minority students as direct entry from high school to college. African American and Hispanic students are also clustered in certain types of institutions—28 percent of all bachelor's degrees for African Americans are conferred by Historically Black Colleges and Universities and 18 percent of all bachelor's degrees for Hispanics are conferred by predominantly Hispanic Serving Institutions. These statistics are a testament to the enduring importance of such colleges and universities; but such numbers also call into question some of the conclusions regarding the level of integration we have achieved nationally.

Barriers to Access:

Far from preparing for these rising enrollments, several public policy trends are threatening even existing levels of access. Rising tuition, a reliance on loans more than grants to finance education, and decreasing levels of budgetary support for state colleges and universities endanger the affordability of campus-based public higher education for all students, while a negative climate in regard to racially based affirmative action programs raises special hazards for historically underrepresented groups. Such limitations of access will accentuate the gulf between the educational and economic haves and have nots, further polarizing the American populations across racial and ethnic lines. But not only the poor will be affected. The problem of affordability is already affecting middle class students, most particularly middle class adult students seeking the retraining they require to keep apace of a complex global economy.

- **Budget Reductions for Public Higher Education:** Budgets for higher education across the states have been uneven for the past decade or so, but over-all support for higher education has unquestionably dropped. State appropriations to higher education decreased sharply through the 1980s and continue to diminish more modestly today, representing a $7.7 billion loss since 1990 alone. While higher tuition has borne the brunt of many of these cuts, the resulting reductions in targeted enrollment levels, course offerings, and support services have had their impact on access, making college admissions more competitive at some public colleges and universities and making transfer from community colleges more problematic. The time-to-degree rate has elongated for many students, placing many financially "at risk" or nontraditional students in even greater jeopardy of dropping out. Students graduating from weaker primary and secondary systems, such as prevail in our inner cities, or the one in twenty students with limited English proficiency, such as the children of recent immigrant families, are particularly hurt by these changes. Recent changes in United States immigration law and "welfare reform" could exacerbate these discrepancies.

"In each and every state, state tax-appropriation per $1000 of personal income for higher education declined between 1978-79 and 1993-94...[This has happened] during economic expansion and recession, under Democrats and Republicans, [and] in states with both high and low historical support for higher education"

—Mortenson Research Letter

- **Tuition at four-year public colleges** over the past 14 years has increased three times as fast as household income and at more than three times the rate of consumer price inflation. College tuition soared 234 percent between the 1980-81 and 1994-95 school years. In order to compensate for diminished state resources, public college tuition has recently been increasing at an average of about 6 percent a year after several years of double-digit inflation. When AASCU was founded, students in public institutions paid only 16 percent of the costs of their education. Today that figure has almost tripled to 46 percent of today's far higher costs of their education.

"More than the cost of Harvard, it is the rising tuition at state schools that subverts the democratic ideal."

—*Time* Magazine

- **Reductions in Financial Aid:** Sharp reductions in need-based financial aid and a shift from grants to loans have been occurring at the same time that many middle income families are facing income stagnation and almost 40 million people—disproportionately minority—live below the poverty line. In 1980 Pell grants covered 82 percent of the cost at public colleges. By 1995 those grants covered only 34 percent of the cost. Subsidized and unsubsidized loan programs partly took the place of grants. For students from all income groups, repayment of loans—as much as $20,000 for four years at a public college or university—can be

onerous. For students from the lowest family income groups (groups for whom unemployment is a frightening reality) taking out a large loan—whatever the hypothetical future benefits—is a major deterrent to enrollment.

- **Changes in Financial Aid:** The financial aid pie has not only grown smaller; it is also being cut up differently. Many states have reallocated a substantial portion of their need-based scholarship money to merit-based awards, thus lowering the availability of monies for students with less adequate educational backgrounds. Other technical changes, such as exempting home equity as a financial asset, also tend to help the more economically stable student at the expense of the more financially fragile one.

- **Negative Climate:** Public higher education has lost its priority status during recent decades, as other state needs such as health care and prisons have gobbled up resources. Concomitant with that change and intertwined with it have been increasingly negative attitudes toward opportunity programs and affirmative action programs in particular. Both the judiciary and the court of public opinion have seemingly turned away from the idea of compensatory or "equalized" opportunity based on race or gender, either denying that race- or gender-based injustices exist any more or claiming that actions designed to level the playing field for women and minorities unfairly tilt against the "traditional" players.

All these changes have a different impact on minority students if only because such students are likely to be financially vulnerable. But they are not alone. Population and other demographic shifts have increased the proportion of high-school students who are poor and poorly prepared for college. Lower and middle-income whites, nontraditional students (older, financially independent, working, part-time, or responsible for children or older dependents) are also experiencing an attrition in educational opportunity that threatens to grow worse.

What Can College and University Presidents Do?

Educational opportunity is imperative, but achieving it is not without controversy and difficulty. Some opponents of broad access to higher education argue that the United States needs to

implement a European apprentice system that would train students for specific occupations more than it needs higher education for the masses. But the current low unemployment rate in the United States compared to persistent European high unemployment rates weakens that argument. Others argue that not all students want or are capable of higher education, as evidenced by the widespread need for remedial programs. Access, however, only means opportunity—for those who want a college education and for those *potentially* capable of its benefits *if* offered remedial work to compensate for unequal and inadequate prior education.

Powerful financial pressures also undermine the accessibility of higher education. When money is short, as it is for most public systems, college slots and services diminish and an understandable triage mentality urges that scarce resources be reserved for those students who have seemingly earned it by prior academic prowess and who are "good risks" for completing their college studies.

This last argument, in particular, points to what presidents must do:

- **educate the public to the demographic and economic realities of America's future**—College presidents rightly shrink from political partisanship. But educating the public—including legislators, trustees, parents, faculty, students, and community groups—to the coming changes in American life and helping all of us meet these changes positively and constructively calls for vigorous and inspired educational leadership.

- **press for adequate resources to meet emerging needs**—This presidents have always done. The emerging access needs for America's rapidly growing population and the special case to be made for minority inclusion lend gravity to the budgetary arguments that must be made, even in the current cost-cutting environment. College and university presidents need to manage, prioritize and reallocate resources. But they must also have an adequate resource base in order to maintain quality and allow for change.

- **advocate low-tuition, high-aid formulas**—Public college tuition, although still a "good buy," is rising out of reach for many Americans. Experiments with high-tuition, high-aid formulas have demonstrably failed: when the money grows short, high

tuition remains and high aid disappears. Access depends on affordability. College presidents need to continue to support the national education associations in their efforts to reverse the trend from grants to loans and to oppose efforts to curtail financial aid.

- **seek alliances with business and industry**—Business and industry depend on the quality of the workforce. Many have deliberate and elaborate plans for minority group hiring as part of their focus on diversity. College presidents need to foster this "natural alliance" between business and higher educational leaders to safeguard and promote the quality of our human capital.

INCLUSION

It is easy to see how the economic barriers to access differentially affect minority and disadvantaged students. More difficult to untangle are the twisted skeins of bias and stereotyping that also take their toll on minority groups. Like the legendary snake that bites its own tail, the results of persistent discrimination—lessened academic achievement, higher rates of poverty and social ills—are often used to justify the prejudicial treatment that created them. At the very moment when America most needs to embrace its diversifying culture, we are in danger of being held back by the historic biases against persons of color.

These preexistent biases are being exacerbated by the influx of new non-European immigrants. The senior editor of *Forbes* magazine may represent an extreme view in describing America as becoming an "alien nation" in which the traditional white population is being overwhelmed by persons of color. But he is not alone. Millions of Americans—including people of great good will and fairness—see the familiar landscape of assured financial security and upward mobility for themselves and their children vanishing. Not fully able to comprehend the giant shifts in the global economy that are undermining America's historic primacy and frightened by a slow-growth economy, many of them are displacing their economic fears onto the very groups that constitute so large a measure of America's demographic and economic future.

Many business leaders have long recognized that prejudice is dysfunctional and that only an environment of inclusion will safeguard America's current and future viability. Andrew F. Brimmer of the Federal Reserve Board points to the inefficiencies in the use of the labor force arising from failure to fully use the existing education, skills and experience of minorities in the population—the dollars and cents cost of prejudice. Using African Americans as his study group, he notes that "if racial discrimination were to be eliminated, blacks could migrate more fully from low to high productivity occupations, where their contribution to total production would be increased." The result would be a gain in the "nation's total output of goods and services." Brimmer also believes that "a more rational use of the labor force" would most likely require greater plant and equipment outlays, thus boosting capital as well as labor incomes.

THERE IS "A FORMIDABLE CATALOG OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AVAILABLE TO BUSINESS MANAGEMENTS WHICH DEAL WITH DIVERSITY QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY."

—ROBERT T. GOLEMBIEWSKI

Other economic analysts and business managers note the importance of creating a multicultural workforce to:

- avoid intergroup conflict at work, with its concomitant loss of productivity
- promote economic prosperity by increasing the buying power of all segments of the population
- give a sales advantage to businesses known for their positive attitudes toward minorities
- reduce turnover and absenteeism owing to the perceived hostility in the environment
- generate greater creativity as a result of diminished communication barriers and increased diversity of viewpoints
- expand leadership opportunities for American business and industry worldwide by taking advantage of a multicultural workforce in our own country

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN FOSTERING INCLUSIVENESS:

Much of the prejudice—and passive acceptance of prejudice—prevalent in society is beyond the control of the university. But just as the university serves a valuable purpose through its accessibility in advancing minorities and women into the American economic mainstream, so, too, the university is a pacesetter in shaping the attitudes of America's future citizens and training the leaders who will shape its directions. Universities are often seen as custodians of the past. And so they are. But they are also pathfinders for the future. No experience is potentially more important in changing the racial attitudes of the coming generation than the years it spends in college. No place is more important in teaching students to live together in diverse communities. And in no place is the exploration of diverse viewpoints closer to the fundamental mission of the institution. Dedicated to objectivity—and therefore to eliminating prejudice—our colleges and universities have a special responsibility and a special capability to foster the environment and outcomes of equal opportunity. They are the laboratories and prototypes for our future society.

Like most Americans, many students, both minority and white, tend to live in monoracial and monocultural communities. Their neighborhoods, their social networks, and their schools often have little or no racial diversity—all-white, all-black, all-Hispanic. Even where schools are integrated, the experience of diversity often ends at the end of the day as students return to their home communities and their familiar networks of social interaction. College life, particularly residential campus life, is their first true multicultural experience for many students.

"INDIVIDUALS WITH RELATIVELY LARGE AMOUNTS OF EDUCATION ARE MORE INCLINED TO HOLD RACIALLY TOLERANT VIEWS THAN INDIVIDUALS WITH RELATIVELY LITTLE EDUCATION."

—L. Scott Miller

Despite incidents of racial and ethnic conflicts on campus and despite the cultural clashes and behavior problems that often occur as students from differing backgrounds mingle in an unfamiliar milieu, *campus integration does work*. Noted education analyst Alexander Astin reports that socializing with people from different racial or ethnic groups does promote a student's "commitment to promoting racial understanding" ***and*** enhances his or her "satisfaction in most areas of the college experience." While such socialization is likely to occur naturally, other factors that promote attitudes of inclusion will only occur where the institution itself emphasizes diversity. Opportunities which the administration and faculty can create for students include:

- discussion groups on racial or ethnic issues
- racial or cultural workshops
- awareness and skill-building workshops
- ethnic studies courses and multicultural elements within the curriculum

Nor need these efforts at inclusion be specifically ethnic in nature. Demonstrable changes in campus climate can occur through a wide range of campus activities, all of which indicate to students that they are important as individuals, that their contributions are appreciated, and that their messages are attended to. These include:

- encouraging group membership
- encouraging multiple group membership and intergroup work
- developing means to make people and groups matter

"Taking women's or ethnic or Third World courses, participating in racial or cultural awareness workshops, discussing racial or ethnic issues, and socializing with someone from another racial or ethnic group...were associated with greater self-reported gains in cognitive and affective development (especially increased cultural awareness), with increased satisfaction in most areas of the college experience, and with increased commitment to promoting racial understanding."

—Alexander Astin

- developing a process by which conflicts can be worked through
- developing an institutional mission statement that includes the benefits of community

All of these activities are fraught with potential tensions and controversies, none more so than the issue of what constitutes a multicultural curriculum. But it is precisely this dialogue—with all its false steps and distortions—that needs to take place if we are to forge the multicultural America of the future, enriched by the intellectual wealth of its diverse population rather than enervated by merely coping with it. According to Astin, students whose college experiences have promoted their racial understanding and cultural awareness also have a strengthened belief that the individual can change society. It is those students—majority and minority—who are our leadership core for the future.

What Can College and University Presidents Do?

Nowhere is presidential leadership more significant than in establishing a campus climate that is conducive to diversity. Campus presidents are *the* voice for their institutional value systems. They are the spokespersons who articulate campus philosophy. Contested and even beleaguered as they sometimes are, they still have the power to be heard both on-campus and off. Research such as that of Sylvia Hurtado of the University of Michigan shows "that students in all types of colleges and universities perceive relatively low levels of racial tension in institutions which set a 'tone' that is congenial to all students and give high priority to student-centered matters." Presidents have a role to play all along the access-to-graduation continuum:

- **Recruitment and Admissions:** Recruitment and admission are not passive processes. For students from historically underrepresented populations targeted efforts are often needed to assure their enrollment at the baccalaureate level. A markedly lower high school graduation rate for African American and Hispanic students than for white students leads perforce to their significantly lower rate of college enrollments; and those who do enroll in college often do so with the handicap of having been graduated from academically weaker high schools marked by poorer preparation and often by lower expectations on the part of the school, the parents, and the community. Exemplary

activities that college and university presidents can encourage and initiate include: (1) working with elementary and high schools in economically disadvantaged areas or areas with high minority populations to provide informational programs; allowing academically talented high school students to enroll in college courses; encouraging faculty and academic departments to work with their high school counterparts; creating linkages with existing local, state, and national minority networks; involving middle school and high school teachers in identifying talented potential college students; using successful minority college students as ambassadors and role models; providing pre-freshman summer experiences for talented but underprepared students; and (2) cooperative efforts with community colleges, such as articulation agreements and guaranteed admissions programs for their graduates. With more than 50 percent of minority students enrolled in two-year rather than four-year institutions, community colleges are an excellent source of motivated and relatively well-qualified minority students. The transfer function is especially important in states which are raising the entrance requirements for admission to baccalaureate institutions.

- **Retention and Graduation:** When differences in academic preparation and socioeconomic status are controlled, the retention rates for minority students are equal to those of white students. But for a disproportionate number of minority students these handicaps are not controlled. They come from poor or low-income backgrounds; they are the first in their families to attend college; they may not be native speakers of English; and their primary and high school educations simply do not equal those of their more affluent white compeers. With the decks stacked against their success, simply getting to college is often an heroic personal accomplishment.

Far too many such valuable students never complete their degrees. College attrition rates are high for all students, but for African American, Hispanic and Native American students, the drop-out rates are disproportionately high. As we have seen, African American and Hispanic students are about half as likely as their white peers to complete four years of college, and this gap has not diminished over time. Financial, academic and personal reasons also lead many African American and Hispanic students to take longer to complete college on the average.

Given these inequalities in the so-called level playing field, presidents must combat the growing tendency to withdraw all funding from remedial work, including language skill development. Like other costs, these expenditures must be carefully targeted, and students must be held accountable for the progress that they make. But without these services, a large number of "at-risk" freshmen will not make it through the critical first year. Each institution thus needs thoughtfully to assess the academic support needs of its "at-risk" students in all categories and, with an outcomes assessment instrument in place, maintain or develop a combination of remedial and developmental courses, tutoring centers, and peer mentoring programs. Perhaps it is time to stop thinking of these efforts as remedial but rather as part of an integrated learning program starting where students happen to be when they arrive.

- **Program Quality:** One argument against compensatory educational programs is that they appear to vitiate the quality of education and to authorize lower levels of achievement for minority students. These allegedly lower outcome levels are often seen as unfair in allowing minority students to "get away with" a lesser level of educational accomplishment and harmful in that they ultimately lower the educational standards for all students. Actually, any effort to lower the "outcome" standards for minority students is unfair—to them. Academic support work is simply a bridge from a different point to the same destination a meaningful baccalaureate degree. There are many ways to enter the academy, but all students must leave through the same door.

- **Careers and Graduate Work:** If we are to have the highly trained and multicultural workforce that the future requires, America's state colleges and universities must provide a rigorous, high-quality education that prepares all students for a technologically complex and demanding future. For minority and nontraditional students in particular, this may well mean additional efforts to compensate for inferior elementary and secondary schools that have not provided access to computers and other essentials of modern education. But even well-prepared minority students may require additional attention to assure their success because of the negative pressures that they face. Some recent analyses suggest that many middle-class Hispanic and African American students come from families whose own educational background is less than optimal. Such preparation for the future may also require conscious and sometimes special

efforts to guide minority students into unfamiliar careers—careers where the jobs of the future will be. Career planning centers, like academic advising offices, need to be made aware of the special tasks they have to acclimate and assist these newcomers to the world of higher education. Advisers need especially to work toward guiding the ablest of such students into graduate schools, where they will become the "seed corn" of the future professoriate, and into the many professional fields, including those requiring math and science backgrounds in which they are still sorely underrepresented.

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

—Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Equity

Equity, justice, equal opportunity—what constitutes fairness in higher education?

Forty years ago it was clear that much of American higher education was failing flagrantly in the area of racial justice. Legalized inequality excluded African Americans and other minorities from many publicly financed colleges and universities. And even in states where legal segregation did not exist, minority students were woefully underrepresented and minority and women faculty conspicuously absent. But as the Supreme Court affirmed in its momentous *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, separate could never be equal. For those who lived through the struggle to implement that ruling, the images of the forced integration of the University of Mississippi (1962) and the University of Alabama (1963) are indelibly etched in memory.

Higher Education and The Civil Rights Movement:

In the heady years that followed, a series of civil rights enactments further reflected the changing tide of public opinion. Among those specifically affecting higher education during the 1970s were:

- *The Equal Pay Act of* 1963 affirming the right of women and men to earn equal pay for substantially equal work
- *Title* VI *of the Civil Rights Act of* 1964 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, religion or national origin
- *Title* IX *of the Education Amendments of* 1972 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex against students and employees of educational institutions receiving federal funds
- *Section* 504 *of the Age Discrimination Act of* 1967 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability
- *The Age Discrimination Act of* 1975 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age

These legislative enactments were bolstered by Presidential Executive Orders. In 1965 President Johnson ordered federal

contractors to boost their number of minority employees, while the Nixon administration introduced the requirement for "goals and timetables" in a 1972 ruling. Just as the *Brown* decision struck down *de jure* discrimination, these legislative and executive "affirmative actions" were intended to overcome the *de facto* prejudice and racism that still perpetrated its injustices against women, minorities and other groups.

Affirmative Action

Over time, all these supportive actions for women and minorities have become lumped under the generic term of "affirmative action." Technically, affirmative action refers to any measure, beyond the simple termination of a discriminatory practice that is adopted to correct or compensate for past or present discrimination or to prevent discrimination from recurring in the future. It does not mean "quotas." It does not mean the hiring or admission of unqualified candidates.

The opponents of "affirmative action" claim it is a "quota system" that gives preference to unqualified or less qualified women and minorities on the basis of race or gender. However, proponents of affirmative action argue that existing inequalities need to be overcome and that justice and equity cannot occur in a racist and sexist society. Indeed, few issues in current American life—and certainly few in higher education—have been debated with more passion than the "affirmative action" question.

Those who oppose "affirmative action" claim that individual "merit" must always supersede group claims. They believe, often with great passion, that affirmative action:

- categorizes individuals on the basis of race and gender rather than accomplishment, thus embracing and validating the very abuses that it seeks to overcome;
- constitutes reverse discrimination since, in seeking to redress past grievances against women and minorities, it often unfairly harms white males of equal or superior qualification;
- is becoming a race- and gender-based entitlement program based not on merit but group membership;

"Affirmative Action poses a conflict between two cherished American principles: the belief that all Americans deserve equal opportunities and the idea that hard work and merit, not race or religion or gender or birthright, should determine who prospers and who does not."

—*US News & World Report*

"THE IDEA OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IS NOT TO FORCE PEOPLE INTO POSITIONS FOR WHICH THEY ARE UNQUALIFIED BUT TO ENCOURAGE INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP REALISTIC CRITERIA FOR THE ENTERPRISE AT HAND AND THEN TO FIND A REASONABLY DIVERSE MIX OF PEOPLE QUALIFIED TO BE ENGAGED IN IT. WITHOUT THE REQUIREMENTS CALLING FOR PLANS, GOOD-FAITH EFFORTS AND THE SETTING OF BROAD NUMERICAL GOALS, MANY INSTITUTIONS WOULD DO WHAT THEY HAD ALWAYS DONE: ASSERT THAT THEY HAD LOOKED BUT 'COULDN'T FIND ANYONE QUALIFIED,' AND THEN GO OUT AND HIRE THE WHITE MAN THEY WANTED TO HIRE IN THE FIRST PLACE."

—ROGER WILKINS

- does not help minorities and women but rather stigmatizes them and undermines their needed self-help efforts;
- unfairly imposes monoracial identities on persons of mixed parentage; and
- allows persons to self-designate their ethnicity in ways that may at times unfairly advantage them.

Those arguing on behalf of "affirmative action" point, with equal intensity, to the importance of making specific efforts on behalf of minorities and women as a necessary step in achieving social and economic justice. They base their arguments on the need to:

- remedy the effects of historic patterns of segregation and discrimination and the continuing harm that hidden biases and stereotypes impose on women and minorities;
- treat women and minorities as group members as well as individuals precisely because such evidence as *glass ceilings* and *sticky floors* and unequal pay for equal work shows they are still being categorized and disadvantaged on the basis of their gender or their racial identity;
- redress the implicit bias contained in many definitions of "merit," which simply preserve the *status quo* without examining the real qualifications needed for success;
- compensate for the tragic extent to which historic and current bias continue to relegate disproportionate numbers of minorities to a ghettoized life below the poverty line;
- help achieve a level of entitlement and diversity of participation and viewpoint that will enrich the nation; and
- accelerate the progress of minorities into the mainstream of American social and economic life, especially in view of America's dramatically changing demographic profile.

Opponents of affirmative action insist on the principle that hard work and merit, not race or gender, should determine who prospers and who does not; they tend to cite white male experiences of reverse discrimination. Proponents of affirmative action assert that America has never been color- or gender-blind and point to the

continuing wage and status gaps for women and minorities to reinforce their position. How, they ask, can one speak of a "level playing field" or "color-blind society" when 53 percent of African American men aged 25-34 are either unemployed or earn too little to lift a family of four from poverty, when in 86 occupations tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics women earn 20-35 percent less than men, and when 30 percent of African American and Hispanic families live below the poverty line in contrast to less than 10 percent of all white families. Writing in opposition to affirmative action, US *News & World Report* calls it "a time bomb primed to detonate in the middle of the American marketplace." Supporters of affirmative action see it as a defense against the potential seething unrest born of persistent social and economic discrimination and increasing stratification of rich and poor.

A Changing Legal and Legislative Environment:

Just as higher education was an important initial battleground in the battle *for* civil rights, it has also been a hotly contested arena in the backlash *against* affirmative action. A tidal wave of books, articles, protests, political pronouncements, and proposed and actual legislation and court cases, all attest to the extent to which efforts to diversify the student body, increase the numbers of women and minority faculty members, and expand the canon of the curriculum have evoked public anger. By early 1996, at least 17 states had pending legislative or voter initiatives proposing actions that would weaken or eliminate affirmative action. Still pending before Congress is the Dole-Canady "Equal Opportunity Act of 1995," which, among other requirements, prohibits the use of goals and timetables and outlaws the use of affirmative action to remedy past or present discrimination. Dole-Canady would also forbid consent decrees involving preferences.

"The doctrine of a 'color-blind' Constitution...speaks to a time not yet here, when the historic stain of racial oppression is erased, competition is truly equal, and diversity comes more naturally."

—*The New York Times*

Administrative actions have also curtailed the use of affirmative action. In July 1995 the Board of Regents of the University of California prohibited the use of "race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin as criteria in its employment and contracting practices" effective December 31, 1996. The elimination of any reference to race or gender in admissions is barred as of 1997. Supplemental criteria, such as social or economic disadvantage, are to be developed instead. All University of California presidents opposed this action.

"In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. ... And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently."

—Justice Harry Blackmun, *Bakke v. University of California*

Three major court cases affecting higher education offer a capsule history of the changing climate toward affirmative action over the past 20 years. Out of the welter of lawsuits and judicial rulings directly or indirectly impinging on American higher education, these three rulings can be seen as signifying the rising and ebbing tides of affirmative action.

- *Adams v. Richardson* (1973): The *Adams* case represents the high tide of affirmative action policies. A response to the continuing effects of historic de jure segregation, this 1973 ruling resulted from a class action suit brought by the NAACP. The *Adams* decrees require 18 states with historically segregated higher educational systems to develop and implement desegregation plans that would result in unitary systems serving blacks and whites equitably. A further requirement demanded the equitable financing of the perpetually underfunded historically black institutions in those states.

- *Bakke v. University of California* (1978): The *Bakke* case is by far the best known of all such rulings. Although it is commonly seen as a victory over "reverse discrimination," it nonetheless upheld the important principle that "race matters." The 5-4 Supreme Court decision in this case invalidated a medical school admissions plan involving what the Court ruled to be a quota system, but affirmed that remedying the effects of previous discrimination and promoting a diverse student body was a compelling government interest. Still "the law of the land," the *Bakke* judgment allows for race to be part of a narrowly tailored admissions program in cases where race-neutral means would have been ineffective in achieving these goals.

- *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996): This hotly debated ruling in the Fifth Circuit technically affects only Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Very much a product of the current climate, it denies that racial diversity is a compelling government interest and outlaws any use of race as a factor in admissions, although alumni-relatedness may be used to grant preferences. Already implemented in three states, the *Hopwood* decision has cast a chill over what some are already calling the "post-affirmative action" environment. In July 1996, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of the *Hopwood* decision. But other cases will eventually test the conflict between the legal principles affirmed in *Bakke* and those denied in the *Hopwood* case.

How Have Presidents Responded?

The changed climate for "affirmative action" and the changing legal environment pose both philosophical and practical problems for college and university presidents, whose freedom of action, or even commentary, is often circumscribed by the policies of their regents or trustees.

Speaking for campus presidents, the major national education associations have responded forcefully to the challenges posed by the *Hopwood* decision and expressed disappointment in the Supreme Court's refusal to rule on it. Many presidents have also responded to the moral dilemmas posed by the new restrictions on affirmative action—particularly by the denial of diversity as a value—to issue strong public statements and to clarify their own admissions policies. Not surprisingly some of the strongest responses have come from the University of California system.

- *Expanded Outreach Programs*: Chang-Lin Tien, chancellor at Berkeley, has initiated a campaign called The Berkeley Pledge. Under this program Berkeley has begun to expand its outreach to inner city youth and is developing "pipelines" starting in kindergarten at selected schools as a means of recruiting minority students.

- *Multiple Admissions Criteria*: Charles E. Young, chancellor of the University of California at Los Angeles, is seeking to "maintain diversity at UCLA without the benefit of affirmative action" by admitting 40 percent of the freshman class, who fall within the university's regular admissions criteria, based on such supplemental criteria as "California residence, ethnic identity, physical and learning disabilities, educational disadvantage, family income and whether a student comes from a two-parent or single-parent family, is first-generation college bound, or has special talents and criteria." UCLA is strengthening its outreach programs to students in junior and senior high school.

Many presidents have also responded to the apparent retreat from equity and diversity with strong philosophical statements. For some, the primary arguments revolve around our national well-being. Princeton University President Harold T. Shapiro makes the case that:

> The achievement of social justice in an increasingly diverse polity such as ours clearly depends on our

"We need to insist upon the essential part that colleges and universities play in creating opportunities for students to live in association with peers who are, in many respects different from themselves but who also have much in common. The process is not always smooth, but its complexity only highlights its importance."

—Neil T. Rudenstine

> capacity to extend empathy and mutual respect—as well as toleration—across lines of color, gender, religion, and ethnic background. . . Our society cannot be strong or just if many are without hope or a perceived stake in our future.

Others have argued the potent benefits of diversity as an educational goal. Harvard President Neil L. Rudenstine, for example, has responded specifically to the *Hopwood* case, which denied a compelling government interest in diversity, by asserting that:

> The most fundamental rationale for student diversity in higher education [is] its educational value. Students benefit in countless ways from the opportunity to live and learn among peers whose perspectives and experiences differ from their own.
>
> A diverse educational environment challenges them to explore ideas and arguments at a deeper level—to see issues from various sides, to rethink their own premises, to achieve the kind of understanding that comes only from testing their own hypotheses against those of people with other views.

Looking back at the history of Harvard, Rudenstine takes note of the long and honored history at his and many other institutions of giving preference to students on the basis of geographic origin. He acknowledges that "no racial or ethnic group is monolithic" and that race or ethnicity alone do not define an "individual's experiences and point of view." Nevertheless, he argues, "race historically has been and still remains a powerful distinguishing feature in our society—one that clearly plays a role in shaping the outlooks and experiences of millions of Americans."

What Can Presidents Do?

Presidents must not be misled by the intensity of the debate over affirmative action into misreading public opinion. It is true that few issues divide the American people more sharply than what constitutes equity in our society. But what the majority believes is very much based on how affirmative action is defined.

Media hype and ideological and political agendas have probably exaggerated the number of so-called "angry white men" who

oppose affirmative action. The assault on affirmative action has been described as flowing "on a river of racism." But it is clear that the question of how to equalize opportunity for women and minorities without hurting others deeply perplexes many Americans who would stoutly declare themselves free of racist or sexist biases. Actually, only 3.6 percent of the discrimination cases—and all but a few of them unsuccessful—filed with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights have been brought by white men claiming "reverse discrimination." The other 96.7 percent have been filed by women and minorities. But a plethora of anecdotal information (unqualified or significantly less qualified students admitted and retained, less qualified staff and faculty hiring, race-defined academic and scholarship programs) have all led to a climate of complaint that is often as rancorous within the walls of academe as without.

The courts, too, have struggled with this issue. At the present moment, the *Bakke* decision, which allows race as a plus factor in the interests of diversity, still governs college and university admissions policies. Although the Court's tendency in recent years has clearly been to narrow the definition of affirmative action, the special benefits of diversity in higher education may yet prevail in whatever "test cases" do come before the Court. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, for example is on record as stating that "although its precise contours are uncertain, a state interest in the promotion of racial diversity has been found to be sufficiently 'compelling,' at least in the context of higher education to support the use of racial consideration in furthering that interest."

Given the constraints of law and the pressures of public opinion, what are the presidents of public colleges and universities to do?

- **continue to recognize that access, inclusion and equity are the goals of the public university and need to be included in their mission statements**—Justice will not have been achieved if the number of women and minority students on a campus is unreasonably disproportionate to their presence in the general population from which its students are drawn, if the lack of a supportive academic and social environment reduces their chances for academic success, and if the failure to provide a rigorous and high-quality curriculum disadvantages them in their future professions and careers.

- **serve to moderate and elevate the debate concerning equity in American society**—Much of the conflict over affirmative

action results from a misapprehension of what the term means. Presidents need, by their words and actions, to reinforce the understanding that affirmative action is not intended to force people into positions for which they are unqualified. Rather it is an effort, beyond simple non-discrimination, to develop more realistic criteria, widen the pool of applicants, search more thoroughly, and consider more broadly. Its intent under the law must be to reach out to populations who have endured a history of discrimination. Goals and timetables, based on available qualified populations, are admissible as measurable objectives under the law. Quotas are not.

"WE WOULD GO FURTHER TO SAY THAT SPECIAL EFFORTS TO ATTRACT PERSONS TO IMPROVE THE OVERALL DIVERSITY OF THE FACULTY, AND TO BROADEN IT SPECIRFICALLY FROM ITS UNISEX OR UNIRACE SAMENESS, SEEM TO US TO STATE A VARIETY OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION WHICH DESERVES ENCOURAGEMENT."

—AAUP POLICY STATEMENT

- **work actively to promote equity in admissions**—For some public institutions the issue of competitive admissions is moot. Required by law to admit all high school graduates in their states, such institutions would seemingly be exempt from the kinds of affirmative action requirements that have roiled highly selective campuses. Many public institutions, however, do practice selective admissions to undergraduate programs and certainly to their graduate and professional programs. All have a moral obligation to continue to reach out to underrepre-sented populations through recruitment and outreach programs. Current law—except in states with specific rulings to the contrary—allows for targeted recruitment and outreach programs and, according to the United States Department of Education, for minority-targeted scholarships to remedy past discrimination or achieve diversity in the student body. Many would argue that developing multiple admissions criteria—to include state residence, ethnic identity, physical and learning disabilities, educational disadvantage, family income and whether a student comes from a two-parent or single-parent family, is first-generation college-bound, or has special talents—are also legitimate ways to expand admissions.

- **work actively to promote equity in faculty and staff hiring**—Just as students from diverse backgrounds create a richness of perspectives for the institutions, so, too, do faculty members from diverse backgrounds bring multiple perspectives and often different foci for teaching and research to the campus. Academia is in many ways a closed culture. Presidents must be on guard against the tendency to close ranks against those with unfamiliar or different qualifications at the same time that they must avoid poisoning the academic atmosphere by appearing to hire an unqualified person simply to achieve a diversity goal. Presidents

must demand of search committees: what job criteria they specified, how faithfully they implemented those criteria, how broadly and actively they conducted their search, and why—if the applicant pool included women and minorities—such candidates were either not given interviews or, if interviewed, not given the position. Racial or gender preferences or quotas are not at issue here. What is at stake is a check-and-balance system that guards against implicit and often unconscious biases. Presidents of institutions with graduate programs should also be especially vigilant for "talent within" or talent that can be brought into the academic "pipeline" by a vigorous program of graduate school recruitment.

College and university presidents are on the firing line. They have the training and responsibility to look thoughtfully at the strengths and weaknesses of American society and to serve as pathfinders and guardians for that future. The current downsizing and downgrading of higher education requires of them the courage to argue for access and to argue that claim on behalf of a rapidly changing student body. They also have a responsibility to recruit that new student body, as well as the more traditional one, to nurture its abilities, to strive for a faculty representative of the true American talent pool, and to foster the values of diversity and inclusion on which the future of America must rest. College and university presidents can help to clarify and moderate the current rancor over equity by seeking equity as a normal condition on their own campuses and by promoting equity in the wider community.

Conclusion

All these goals—access, inclusion, and equity—are interconnected. All assume the paramount role of higher education as a personal and public good, and all are premised on a concept of America as an open, egalitarian and pluralistic society. The goal of equity emphasizes race, gender and ethnicity more than the other two goals because it represents the effort to cope with prior—and continuing—exclusivity and discrimination. But all three goals assume the common right of all intrinsically capable students to enter college, to receive a quality education, and, if they work hard enough and well enough, to earn a degree representing rigorous standards of achievement.

"In the nation's poorest schools where hiring is most lax and teacher turnover is constant, the results are disastrous. Thousands of students are taught throughout their school careers by a parade of teachers without preparation in the fields they teach, inexperienced beginners with little training and no mentoring, and short-term substitutes trying to cope with constant staff disruptions. It is more surprising that some of these children manage to learn than that so many fail to do so."

—Report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Unfortunately, all three goals also present the same dilemmas. How to do good without doing harm? How to remedy existing inequalities without creating new ones? If college admissions are limited, who is to be chosen: the more academically qualified or the less? If college resources are dwindling, what is to be supported: the traditional academic program or needed supportive services? If faculty and staff numbers are in a no-growth or in a "downsizing" mode, how much allowance can be made for diversity as a goal?

Curtailed resources for colleges and universities are at the root of many of these dilemmas. All over the country, campuses are being called upon to redefine their missions, to sharpen their programmatic goals, to review their productivity, to scrutinize the quality of their graduates, and to cut their budgets. For access, inclusion and equity to be included in this process, they must first be on the table as explicitly stated goals of the institutional mission and then subject to review based (as any other aspects of that mission would be) on regional and state demography, on state and local needs, and on the short- and long-term benefits to the economy. Advocacy begins with this analysis, and any claim to additional public resources must begin with proof of the social and economic necessity for such funding. But self-analysis begins here, too. Public colleges and universities whose mission statements do not contain access, opportunity and equity as formal and prominent institutional goals need to reevaluate their priorities.

Even if funding were plentiful, however, not all the dilemmas would go away. As has been seen in the discussion of inclusion as a goal, legitimate questions exist regarding the need for colleges and

universities to do the work that the high schools should have done. And some of the most profound questions in our society revolve around the issue of using race and racial preferences as a criterion for admission, advancement and hiring.

In regard to providing access for students unprepared for college work, the critics are correct but unrealistic. The September 1996 report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future makes very plain that the worst schools are in the poorest neighborhoods. It points out that schools with a high level of non-white and/or poverty-level students have far higher percentages of unqualified teachers than schools with white, middle-class, or affluent constituencies. When those conditions are remedied, when all American students receive equitable primary and secondary schooling, just so soon—and not before—will America's colleges be exempt from the need to admit and assist students who are intrinsically talented and motivated but unequally and inadequately prepared. Until such time, it is hard to see how justice can be served without special assistance being given to such students.

Far more difficult to resolve is the equity issue, specifically in regard to the use of race in college and university admissions and hiring. Some of the controversy, admittedly, results from a misapplication of affirmative action principles which may have resulted in the admission of an unqualified student or the hiring of an unqualified faculty member. Critics have been quick to seize upon any such evidence. But much of the furor, as has been seen, is based on a misunderstanding—sometimes real, sometimes seemingly deliberately fomented—of what affirmative action means. A very recent trend seems to suggest that public opposition to affirmative action is losing momentum, as long as such considerations are not framed simply in terms of "racial quotas" or "racial preferences." Apart from California, none of the states where affirmative action legislation or referenda have been pending has achieved passage so far. Indeed, virtually every state legislative proposal launched in the past year to curtail affirmative action has failed. *Mend it, don't end it* has been described as the current prevailing view.

For colleges and universities, the issue of equity, like the issue of resource allocation, requires a rethinking of premises. In regard to admissions, some public institutions have open admissions policies which allow all high school graduates, regardless of grades

or other performance criteria, to be admitted unreservedly. Others, however, have more selective freshman admissions for some undergraduate programs or limited and rigorous entrance requirements for professional and graduate programs. For all these institutions, the real question is what constitutes "qualification"—purely a numerical score or a more comprehensive measurement of achievements and potentialities—and what goals does the campus seek in the composition of its students? Does the campus seek a diverse student population? Is it sufficiently cognizant of the intrinsic as well as the long-term economic and social benefits of educating a truly representative population? If not race alone—although many would argue that discrimination impedes the progress of even middle-class and affluent black and Hispanic students—then a complex of factors, such as income, educational disadvantage, first-generation family background, combined with race as a "plus factor" would still appear to be legitimate criteria for college admissions. There is no "one-size fits all" answer to admissions criteria. Each college must, in conformity with what the law allows, develop its policies with regard to the population it serves and the nature of the programs it offers. But there is a "one goal fits all" imperative—a student body as representative as possible of the diversity and talent that is America. Every college and university in America has the responsibility to help achieve that goal.

The same thoughtful pushing back on first principles also needs to occur with faculty and staff hiring. As primarily teaching institutions, AASCU colleges and universities have a flexibility denied more purely research universities where narrowly specialized faculty are needed to pursue specific research agendas. AASCU institutions can often seek a more general disciplinary background in prospective faculty, looking to teaching ability as well as purely scholarly capability. There is a tendency for Tweedledum to hire Tweedledee—an inbuilt bias on behalf of the status quo and an inbuilt defensiveness against new competitors such as women and minorities. But what appear as immutable criteria are sometimes only the results of force of habit. Affirmative action asks that institutions examine more thoughtfully the relationship between the criteria they set and the educational goals they pursue and that they search more widely and more open-mindedly for those who meet those needs.

The courts will no doubt continue to rule on the specific legalities of affirmative action. But America is not yet in what some have

called the post-affirmative action era. It cannot afford to ignore the issues of race and gender as long as large segments of its population continue to live in poverty neighborhoods without jobs and often without hope, attend inadequate and underfunded schools, are still enveloped by stereotypes and misperceptions, and still face discrimination in the job market. If we believe in access, then equity and inclusion for *all* Americans are essential—both morally and pragmatically. America's colleges and universities are, as they have always been, crucial for providing higher educational opportunity for all capable and motivated students, for helping to develop in young people a capacity for mutual understanding and tolerance, and for pointing the way toward social justice. The urgent needs of our own century, which will only intensify in the century to come, demand that our colleges and universities be leaders in forging what may finally come to be the America of all our dreams.

What Can College and University Presidents Do?

Previous segments of this study have identified specific actions that presidents can take in addressing issues of access, inclusion and equity. More globally, presidents have the responsibility to:

- *believe*—A commitment to access, inclusion and equity is the moral obligation of every president who assumes the leadership of a public college or university. That belief must be communicated in words and in deeds.

- *advocate*—Presidents have a unique opportunity to influence the elected leaders of our society. Although it goes against the grain of the current trend toward budget cutting, presidents need to be advocates both for the principles and policies identified in this study and for the resources needed to implement them. In many parts of the country, public colleges and universities must begin to plan now for the extraordinary demographic growth projected for the next half century. In all parts of the country, policies are needed to make sure that access and equity are fully maintained.

- *resist easy solutions*—The issue of equity in particular has been highly politicized. Presidents need to take advantage of the seemingly more tempered mood that is emerging in regard to affirmative action, to devise admissions and hiring plans for their campus that are demonstrably fair because they look at the real

criteria for successful performance and because they accept and energetically implement a commitment to diversity as part of their search processes.

- *be future oriented*—Presidents must indeed be educators. The students whom their institutions prepare will indeed be the leaders of the coming century. Presidents have an obligation to them not simply to prepare them well for tomorrow but to help shape the tomorrow they will face.

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